

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office action mailed on January 23, 2006 has been carefully reviewed and the above identified amendments have been provided to thoroughly address each of the objections and rejections provided by the examiner in that Office action. In addition, the following remarks are submitted to clarify and explain the importance of the above amendments and to support a finding by the examiner that the claims, as amended, are now in a form warranting allowance of this case. Accordingly, the undersigned respectfully requests reconsideration by the examiner in this case.

At the outset, applicant notes from the most recent Office action that the examiner indicated that claims 5-10 and 12-14 would be allowable if an objection to claim 5 is corrected. The examiner further indicated that claims 20-22 and 26 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form and including all of the limitations of their base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant has elected to comply with these requirements of the examiner to place this case in proper form for allowance.

In particular, claim 5 has been amended to overcome the objection identified by the examiner. Claim 5 now provides proper antecedent basis for "said spine" by rearranging limitations within claim 5 so that the phrase "said spine" does not occur until after this limitation has been previously introduced. Applicant respectfully submits that claim 5 now overcomes this objection by the examiner and should be considered to exhibit allowable status. Claims 6-10 and 12-14 depend from amended claim 5, and thus benefit from the amendments made to claim 5. Accordingly, claims 6-10 and 12-14 should now also be in a form warranting allowable status.

The examiner had indicated that claim 20 would be allowable if amended to include the requirements of claim 18 and to be placed in independent form. Applicant has chosen to amend claim 18 to include the requirements of claim 20, so that claim 18 now is identical in content to the content that claim 20 would have had if it had been modified to include the requirements of claim 18. Accordingly, for the reasons identified

by the examiner for indicating the potential allowability of claim 20, claim 18 should now be in a form warranting allowable status.

Claims 19 and 23 depend from amended claim 18 and thus benefit from the amendments made to claim 18. Accordingly, claims 19 and 23 should now be in a form warranting allowable status. Claim 20 has been canceled in that its limitations have been added to claim 18, making claim 20 redundant.

Claim 21 has been amended to depend from amended claim 18. Claim 21 thus benefits from the amendments made to claim 18 and should also be in a form warranting allowable status. Claim 22 depends from claim 21 and thus benefits from the amendments made to claim 21 and claim 18, such that claim 22 should now be in a form warranting allowable status.

The examiner had indicated that claim 26 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form and including the requirements of claim 24. Applicant has amended claim 26 to include the requirements of claim 24, such that claim 26 should now be in a form warranting allowable status. Claim 24 has been canceled in that its limitations have been added to claim 26, making claim 24 redundant. Claim 25 has been amended to change its dependency from canceled claim 24 to amended claim 26. Accordingly, claim 25 benefits from the amendments made to claim 26 and should now also be in a form warranting allowable status.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the examiner pass this case to issue. If, upon consideration, the examiner believes further issues remain outstanding or new ones have been generated, the undersigned requests that the examiner call the undersigned to set up a personal or telephone interview with the undersigned to resolve any such remaining issues.

Respectfully Submitted:



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Date